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10:45 AM - NUCLEAR MEETING
(15 minutes)

Jack Marsh's office
Monday, October 11, 1976

~~Wheel hours~~

~~For Publications Sunday~~



UNITED STATES ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE DIRECTOR

October 7, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. JOHN O. MARSH, JR.
Counselor to the President

SUBJECT: Public Understanding of the President's
Non-Proliferation Policy

The current public debate on nuclear proliferation tends to ignore the progress the Administration has made in the last two years, and instead focusses on one or two controversial issues where policy is in flux. When I discussed this problem with you last night, you requested I send you some options for possible action.

Since it is planned that the President soon give a speech to put forward his policy on non-proliferation and nuclear energy, on-the-record statements by Administration officials have to be constrained lest they "scoop" the President. Yet, most of the story is out; in part through the background briefing given by the White House to Don Oberdorfer (Washington POST) and in part because much of the subject matter has come into the public domain through Congressional hearings, etc. Thus, the criticism is getting ahead of the defense.

Options

- I. Move up the President's speech to the earliest possible date, to make it possible for Administration officials to start with an on-the-record defense soon.--In fact, whether or not the President's speech can be given sooner, we should now plan follow-on news briefing(s) to explain the more technical and detailed aspects. I would be pleased to give such a follow-on press briefing to stress the accomplishments and new progress of the President's non-proliferation policy.

- II. Start now with both on-the-record and background defenses of the past Ford accomplishments in non-proliferation while waffling questions of the President's new policy. This has the obvious drawback that it is hard to get a hearing for a story without a news peg, although to some extent it can be done. (I have reiterated in several on-the-record speeches our accomplishments of the last two years--it can be made into an impressive list contrasted with the story from earlier Administrations.)
- III. Give a press conference (or some other presentation) on the past accomplishments, but add a new item or two to provide a news peg. -- This approach is more likely to find its way into the press or TV than Option II. And if done cautiously, it need not detract from the President's speech. (I am committed to an on-the-record speech at Airlie House this coming Saturday, which could be used as a forum.)


Fred C. Ikle

cc: Mr. James E. Connor